

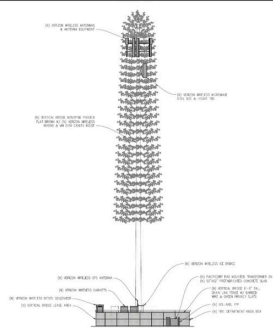
Board Continues Cell Tower Appeal Pending Location of Alternative Site

May 23, 2024

Project Design

- 136-foot wireless facility camouflaged as pine tree
- 1,600-square foot network equipment area surrounded by slatted fence (or acoustic barrier)
- Generator for emergencies
- Room for collocation by additional wireless carriers
- Available space for public safety antennas rent-free

verizon



Drive, looking northeast



The Board of Supervisors voted to continue its discussion for the request for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to erect a Verizon cell phone tower on Railroad Ave.

The supervisors' decision to continue the appeal and uphold the Planning Commission denial of the CUP Appeal was unanimous.

Towers LLC Complete Wireless consultant is the authorized agent for Verizon Wireless, the applicant for the CUP. Representing Towers were Tower Project Manager Kevin Gallagher and legal counsel Paul Albritton. The Project Manager presented a power point describing the Project Design, 136-foot Wireless facility camouflaged as a pine tree, 1,600 square foot network equipment surrounded by slatted fence (or acoustic barrier), Generator for emergencies, room for collocation by additional wireless carriers and available space for public safety antennas rent- free. Gallagher addressed supervisors with a map of wireless coverage and gap in service in the Lake Earl area and north of Crescent City, a worsening condition identified in 2022. Due to extensive growth of public cell phone usage, Verizon Wireless sought to address the less than satisfactory service via a request to erect a specific geographically-placed tower in a quiet rural neighborhood.

Towers legal counsel Albritton addressed the opposition to the project and cited responses to tower objections.

- 1) Appearance of Facility: Pine Tree Design and ample tree cover nearby minimizes visual impact.
- 2) No Need for Facility: Service gap not a factor in wireless facility use permit, Verizon Wireless RV Engineer's statement provides evidence of service gap and Verizon Wireless online marketing map shows only outdoor coverage, and is not a network design tool.
- 3) Impact of Property Values: Not a factor in County Code for a wireless facility use permit. Joint Venture Silicon Valley report confirms no impact on property values.

The Planning Commission reviewed the project at its March 6 meeting. Verizon Wireless presented its request to erect the faux tree tower. Public comment was demonstrably against approval. Neighbors voiced objection to project based on debasement of the character of the rural neighborhood, an increase in artificial noise, degradation of rural views and idyllic backdrops for family activities, negative impacts on current wildlife and harmful materials used to construct faux tree needles, disruption of established paths or foraging areas.

The Planning Commission denied the CUP on a 3-1 vote, with Commissioner Keith Rested abstaining due a conflict of interest associated with the location of his residence and the proposed project. The Commission cited the following:

- Substantial evidence the proposed project will be detrimental to the health, safety, comfort and general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood when such use is not in harmony with the existing land use or public welfare is in doubt.
- The lack of substantial evidence that a significant gap in coverage exists.
- Substantial evidence exists that the benefit to the public does not outweigh the negative impacts of this neighborhood.
- The lack of substantial evidence the applicant conducted a through alternative analysis.

The final bullet point prompted 1st District Supervisor Darrin Short to make a motion (seconded by Supervisor Joey Borges) to table the discussion to a later date and invited Verizon Wireless to bring back alternate site with suitable locations to be considered.

Several public speakers shared their objection of the placement of the tower. Public Speaker/ resident Dave Cooper spoke in support of the tower, maintaining a high level of service. Dave Rested, who owns the ten acre parcel adjacent to the proposed site, and four other speakers voiced opposition to the location of the tower.

The Board of Supervisors next meets Tuesday, May 28 at 10am at the Flynn Center